

PARENTS: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Small Group Activity (10 Minutes)

Break the class into small groups of five. Have them write down all of the things their parents say that they just hate! (For example, "Because I said so!") Have them write down three things they like or admire about their parents. Then have each small group share answers with the entire class.

SHOW THE VIDEO (16 Minutes)

Small Group Questions (10 Minutes - 5 per group, assign 4 or 5 questions)

1. Are your parents fair, and do they understand you?
2. What do they do that frustrates you? What do teenagers do to get back at their parents, or to show they're independent (like drinking, doing drugs, talking back, listening to certain music or wearing clothing parents don't like.)
3. As a group, write down the things you like about your parents.
4. If you were the parent of a teenager, how would the rules be different? Write down your new rules.
5. Why do you think parents make the rules they make? Do they want what's best for you, or are they just punishing you?
6. How much time do you spend each day talking to your parents about anything serious in your life or in their lives?
7. Who do you talk to when you are having trouble with your parents? Are they encouraging and do they help you to make things better?
8. When is it O.K. to disobey your parents? (i.e. parents involved in illegal activities, sexual abuse, drug abuse)
9. How can you make things better between you and your parents? (i.e. talking to them regularly about serious things or setting up a reward system with them such as special privileges if you do all your chores.)

Group Activity (5 Minutes)

Share the answers and discuss questions #1 and #4. Then write down on a chalkboard or large poster paper what the rules the group would have if they were the parents. Ask students why these rules are good or bad. Ask students what the ideal parent is like, or what they wish parents would be. Also, ask them what the ideal teenager is like. Finally, have each small group share their answers to #9. Encourage students to write a letter to their parents telling them how they feel about them, good and bad, and how they'd like to improve their relationship with them.

PARENTS: WRAP-UP

PARENTS AND TEENAGERS MAY ALWAYS CLASH!

- You and your parents will argue because you don't understand each others' lives or cultures. They don't hang around teenagers all day, and you don't hang around adults all day.
- Your parents are human and they make mistakes. They are under a lot of stress and they carry the responsibility to provide for you everything you need. They may not know how to show you how much they really love you.
- Some parents are not good parents. They may have drug or alcohol problems, or they may be violent or abusive.

TRY TO OBEY YOUR PARENTS!

- Unless what they are telling you is obviously wrong (like to do something immoral or illegal) then you should obey, even if it seems unfair. The more you obey, the more freedom you'll get from your parents.

DON'T DO THINGS TO GET BACK AT YOUR PARENTS OR TO PROVE TO THEM YOU ARE INDEPENDENT.

- You will only hurt yourself. Drinking, drugs, sex, slacking off in school and hanging around bad friends will hurt you more than it will hurt your parents!

WE CAN GET ALONG WITH OUR PARENTS!

- Communication is the key. Don't tell them what's on your mind when you're angry. Wait until you're calm so you can rationally explain it.
- If your parents are caring, ask them to start meeting every week to talk about how you are doing as their kid and how your relationship is going with them.
- Set up a reward system with your parents. Go the extra mile above and beyond what they ask, and you'll really get what you want!
- If your parent problems are too big to handle, find an adult you can trust (a teacher, counselor, youth leader, or minister) Discuss with them how you feel about your parents.

HOMework: PARENTS

HOMEWORK Project: Dealing with your parents.

In essay form, answer the following questions:

1. Describe a recent argument you had with one or both of your parents.
2. Was the issue of great importance or a petty difference?
3. What are the three things your parents nag you about most?
4. Compared to other parents, are your parents too strict, fair, or unconcerned?
5. What causes your parents to worry too much about you?
6. What could you do to ease their worries?
7. How much time do you spend communicating with them (actually talking about the issues in your life and theirs).

Write out a plan to better relate to your parents. Include at least the following: A weekly time of talking with them about what is going on in both of your lives, a policy that states what you can talk about without fear; and a new understanding of the expectations you have of each other.

Also, make a list of the rules you would have if you were a parent of a teenager. Include a list of penalties or punishments if the rules are broken. Sit down with your parents and ask them to consider these new rules for you in the form of a contract. (Maybe you can make a new arrangement with them!)

HOMEWORK Project: What's it like to be a parent?

Sit down with one parent (or both parents, if possible) and ask them the following questions. Write down the answers in the form of notes. Use a video camera or tape recorder if it will help.

1. Tell me about your typical day. Start at the very beginning and give me all of the details about what goes on, and tell me what stresses you.
2. What are typical decisions and concerns you have each day about money, your children, keeping the home in order with meals and laundry, etc?
3. How did you learn to be a parent?
4. What is the biggest struggle you have as a parent of a teenager?
5. What is your biggest worry?
6. Why is it hard for you to allow your teenager(s) to do whatever they want?
7. How did your parents treat you when you were a teenager?
8. What did you decide you would do differently when you became a parent?

Considering the responses, write a two to four page paper about what it is like to be a parent. Consider at least the following questions:

1. How is being a parent different than you had imagined?
2. What is difficult about it?
3. How has this changed the way you look at your parents, and what will you do to change your actions and attitudes towards them?